PY C771.1 1913

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

REPORT

OF

A. W. Cook, Tract of Land Commission

HARRISBURG:
C. E. AUGHINBAUGH, PRINTER TO THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA
1913.

PY C774.1

REPORT

OF

A. W. COOK TRACT OF LAND COMMISSION.

To His Excellency, The Governor of Pennsylvania:

Sir: The undersigned, a Commission consisting of three members, appointed the thirty-first day of July, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eleven, by the Governor of Pennsylvania, pursuant to an act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, approved the 14th day of June, A. D. 1911, P. L. 912, which act is as follows:

"Section 1. Be it enacted, &c., That the Governor is hereby directed to appoint a commission, to consist of three persons, whose duty it shall be to make a personal investigation and examination of a certain tract of land in the counties of Jefferson, Clarion and Forest, now owned by A. W. Cook and others. Such examination and investigation shall be for the purpose of determining the propriety of the purchase of said tract by the Commonwealth as a State Park and forest reserve. Said commission shall consist, so far as practicable, of persons experienced in forestry, and shall serve without compensation other than their traveling expenses actually and necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties. After the commission shall have made a complete and thorough examination of said tract it shall report thereon, in writing, to the Governor, giving a description of said tract; and stating whether, in its judgment, said tract should be purchased by the Commonwealth, and the fair value of same. It shall make such other recommendations as it may deem proper, or as the Governor may require.

Section 2. For the purpose of carrying out the intent of this act the sum of three hundred dollars, or so much thereof as may be neces-

sary, is hereby specifically appropriated. All payments shall be made on warrants of the Auditor General, on vouchers of the commission prescribed by said Auditor General," would respectfully report:

That by virtue of their appointment, and in the performance of the duties of the same, in November, 1911, all of the members of said Commission went in person upon the tract of land in question, for the purpose of investigating and examining the same. That they found said tract located along the north bank of the Clarion River, mainly in the counties of Clarion and Forest, a small portion of the same being on the south bank of the Clarion River in the county of Jefferson. That said tract extends along the north bank of said Clarion River, approximately seven miles, and northwardly from said river approximately six miles, and contains approximately seventy-two hundred acres. That said tract is covered mainly by a fine growth of virgin hemlock, white pine, oak and chestnut timber, there being also a considerable amount of other hardwood, such as beech, birch and maple, as well as some second growth pine. That all of the timber is in a thrifty and flourishing condition. That said land is owned, so far as we have been able to ascertain, by A. W. Cook Sons Company, a corporation with its principal office at Cooksburg, in Forest county, Pennsylvania. For the purpose of ascertaining approximately the commercial value of the timber, as it now stands upon said land, we employed Robert McEwen, W. E. Henderson and F. H. Henderson, three experienced timber estimators, to go upon said tract of land and make a careful estimate of the stumpage of each variety of timber growing thereon, and report the result of their work to us. Their report, marked "Exhibit A" is hereto attached and made part of this report.

According to the report of these estimators, and we regard their estimate as a very conservative one, there is now growing upon said tract of land forty-one million feet of merchantable timber and ten thousand cords of bark, which is worth in our judgment, as it stands to-day, not less than $583,000.00. The variety and amount of each variety of merchantable timber, and the value thereof, as shown by the report of said estimators, is as follows:

25,000,000 ft.	Hemlock @ $12.00,	$300,000 00
8,000,000 "	White Pine @ $16.00,	128,000 00
1,000,000 "	Pine, 2d growth 12″ and over at stump @ $16.00,	16,000 00
6,000,000 "	Oak and Chestnut @ $8.00,	48,000 00
1,000,000 "	Other hardwoods, mainly beech, birch and maple @ $5.00,	5,000 00
	Total value of 41,000,000 feet,	$497,000 00

10,000 cords Hemlock Bark @ $5.00.	50,000 00
7,200 acres of land @ $5.00 an acre, ...	36,000 00
Total, ...	$583,000 00

The owners of said land have furnished us with a map, showing the location and boundaries of the same, which said map is hereto attached and made part of this report, marked "Exhibit B," together with other information concerning said tract. They have also furnished us with a book of photographic views taken at different points, showing the scenic beauty of said tract, which is marked "Exhibit C," and also attached hereto and made part of this report. The owners of said land have submitted to us a proposition to sell the same to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the sum of eight hundred thousand dollars ($800,000.00), reserving the gas from five gas wells, now on the land, and gas from such wells as may be drilled or drilling before the acceptance of this proposal, together with the right to maintain said wells, and lay and maintain such pipe lines from the same as may be necessary to convey the gas to places of consumption or sale, and also, reserving the right to remove all personal property from the land, the right to reserve the farm products for the year 1913, the right to use the sawmill on the land during the spring of the year 1913 to manufacture from five hundred thousand to one million feet of lumber, and the right to lay and maintain a water line from the spring at the head of Henry's Run, on the three acres lying north of Cooksburg, not included in the proposal of sale. The said owners make also a second proposition to sell and convey to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the above mentioned property, reserving all coal, oil, gas, and other minerals, for the sum of six hundred thousand dollars ($600,000.00); reserving, also, the right to remove all personal property, farm products for 1913, and the use of the sawmill, as above specified, and also, the right to lay and maintain water pipes, as above set forth, which proposal of sale is also attached thereto and marked "Exhibit D" and made a part of this report. The following named tracts of land within the boundaries of the land in question, are not included in the proposal of sale, above mentioned: Heirs of David Heffron, containing two hundred and fifty acres, more or less; S. H. Cook, containing fifty acres, more or less; Sebastian Cook, containing fifty acres, more or less; Samuel Eshleman, containing ten acres, more or less; and the tract surrounding the spring, containing three acres, more or less—all of which are shown by the map, above referred to and hereto attached. There are also within the boundaries of the tract of land proposed to be sold, six farms, containing in all about three hundred and fifty acres

of land, a description of each, with the acreage and improvements, buildings, etc., of each, is more fully set forth in the proposal of sale, above referred to, and hereto attached and marked "Exhibit E," as by reference being had to which, will more fully and at large appear. There is also located upon said tract of land a sawmill, valued by the owners at about twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000.00), and a hotel at Cooksburg, fronting on the Clarion River. It is claimed by the owners that natural gas is found in paying quantities under practically the entire tract. There are now producing gas wells upon said tract. A description of the natural gas, as well as of the sawmill and hotel, above referred to, are attached to the proposition of sale, above mentioned, and marked "Exhibit F," as by reference being had thereto, will more fully and at large appear. There is also attached to said proposal an estimate of the stumpage of the timber upon said tract, by the owners thereof, which very materially exceeds in quantity the estimate of the estimators employed by us, above referred to, as by reference being had thereto, will more fully and at large appear.

After a thorough examination of said tract of land, and the timber growing on the same, we consider our estimate of its commercial value, as above set forth, to be a very conservative one. We are further of the unanimous opinion that no finer body of virgin growth timber, more beautifully situated and so easily acessable, exists in our Commonwealth; that it is well suited for a State Park and forest reserve, the soil being so well adapted to the growth of trees indigenous to Pennsylvania that by replanting as they mature the growth of timber could be made perpetual, and that the property has a value that would warrant its purchase by the State at the price named by the owners in their second proposition of $600,000.00.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

C. W. SONES,
T. M. KURTZ,
GEO. W. WILLIAMS,
Commissioners.

January 6, 1913.

Exhibit "A."

Williamsport, Pa., January 8, 1912.

Mr. C. W. Sones, Williamsport, Pa.:

Dear Sir: Below we give you estimate of timber, made between December 19, 1911, and January 6, 1912, on lands in Jefferson, Clarion and Forest counties, belonging to A. W. Cook and others:

Hemlock Bark,	10,000 cords.
Hemlock timber,	25,000,000 ft.
Old growth Pine,	8,000,000 "
Second growth Pine, 12" and over at stump,	1,000,000 "
Oak and Chestnut,	6,000,000 "
Other hardwoods, mostly beech, birch and maple,	1,000,000 "
Total estimate, 10,000 cords,	41,000,000 ft.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT McEWEN,
W. E. HENDERSON,
F. H. HENDERSON,
Estimators.

Exhibit "D."

To the Commissioners appointed to examine and report on the propriety of the purchase by the Commonwealth of a certain tract of land in Jefferson, Clarion and Forest counties, owned by the A. Cook Sons Company. (Act of June 14th, 1911, P. L. 912.)

Gentlemen: The A. Cook Sons Company, a corporation having its principal office at Cooksburg, Forest county, Pennsylvania, hereby proposes to sell, and by deed of general warranty convey to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, seven thousand two hundred and nineteen (7,219) acres, more or less, of land owned by it and depicted on the accompanying map, situated in the counties of Clarion, Forest and Jefferson, for the sum of eight hundred thousand dollars, ($800,000.00.)

Reserving the gas from five gas wells now on the land and the gas from such wells as may be drilled or drilling before the acceptance of this proposal, together with the rights to maintain said wells and lay and maintain such pipe lines from the same as may be necessary to convey the gas to places of consumption or sale;

Reserving also, the right to remove all personal property from the land, the right to remove all farm products for the year 1913, the right to use the saw mill on the land during the spring of the year 1913 to manufacture from 500,000 to 1,000,000 feet of lumber, and the right to lay and maintain a water line from the spring at the head of Henry's Run, on the three acres lying north of Cooksburg, not included in this proposal. Or,

2nd. The A. Cook Sons Company will sell and convey to the Commonwealth the above mentioned property, reserving all coal, oil, gas and other minerals, for the sum of six hundred thousand dollars ($600,000.00); reserving also the right to remove all personal prop-

erty, farm products for 1913 and the use of the saw mill as above specified; also the right to lay and maintain water pipes as above set forth.

A. COOK SONS CO.
A. W. COOK,
President.

Cooksburg, Pa., January 1st, 1913.

Explanatory Note:—The tracts of land owned by the heirs of David Heffron, containing two hundred and fifty acres, more or less; S. H. Cook, containing fifty acres, more or less; Sebastian Cook, containing fifty acres, more or less; Samuel Eshleman, containing ten acres, more or less; and the tract surrounding the spring, containing three acres, more or less—all of which are depicted on the accompanying map—are not included in the foregoing proposal.

To the Commissioners:

Gentlemen: For your further information we subjoin our own estimates of the amount of timber on our lands, a brief description of the several farms comprising a part of the property and a statement as to the natural gas in the land:

TIMBER.

Virgin white pine,	9,000,000 feet.
Merchantable second growth white pine,	4,000,000 feet.
Hemlock,	30,000,000 feet.
Hemlock bark,	15,000 cords.
Hardwood, principally white oak and red oak with some cherry, ash, beech, birch, maple, basswood, etc.,	12,000,000 feet.
Railroad ties,	60,000
Pit posts,	150,000
Chemical wood and paper wood,	120,000 cords.

Exhibit "F."

SAW MILL.

The saw mill on the property is a modern, up-to-date, band mill, fully equipped, of the value of about $25,000.00.

Exhibit "E."

FARMS.

"John Cook" Farm, at Cooksburg, on the Clarion River. Seventy-five acres cleared. Fine river bottom.

"Knight" farm. Two miles from Cooksburg. Seventy-five acres cleared and in fine state of cultivation. House, 40x45, two stories high with "L" attached. Barn, 60 x 80 feet, with large shed attached. Ice house. Cattle pens. Good tenant house, 16 x 24 feet. Good orchard.

"Paup" farm. Adjoining Knight farm. Thirty acres in fine state of cultivation. Good farm house, 36 x 40 feet. Small barn. Good orchard.

"McBeth" farm. Adjoining Knight and Paup farms. Forty acres cleared and in good state of cultivation. Two farm houses. Ten cherry trees, 16 peach trees and 198 apple trees. Good spring.

"John Mays" farm. On Clarion River, three miles above Cooksburg. About one hundred acres river bottom land. House, 26 x 30 feet. Barn, 50 x 60 feet.

"Poor Farm." One mile from Cooksburg. About thirty acres cleared and in cultivation. House, 16 x 20 feet. Barn, 36 x 56 feet. Fine Spring.

"Hotel" at Cooksburg, fronting on river and Tom's Run.

Exhibit "F."

NATURAL GAS.

Natural gas is found in paying quantities under practically the entire tract. This product finds a ready sale at the wells at from seven to eight cents per thousand feet. The wells now on the property produce from 200,000 to 300,000 feet per day, each. We consider these wells to be located in our lightest territory. Wells producing from 500,000 to 5,000,000 feet per day are not uncommon in the same region. The cost of drilling a well into the deeper sands is about $2,000.00, fully equipped. The yearly rental paid by the large companies for gas territory in this locality is from one to two dollars per acre.

SECOND GROWTH.

The second growth timber on the land is in unusually fine condition, owing to the fact that the property has been, at all times, protected from forest fires.

Respectfully yours,

A. COOK SONS CO.

A. W. COOK,

President.

Cooksburg, Pa., January 1st, 1913.